

# Tips for Eating Better Together

**1. Balance your meal** by including foods from all the different food groups: meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and grains. Look for freshly made entrée salads that give you “balance in a bowl.” For example, entrée salads with chicken, cheese or almonds provide protein along with fiber and vitamins. If you are counting calories, use a low-fat dressing or skip some of the extras, like croutons.

**2. Choose grilled entrées** to cut down on total fat and saturated fat. If you like chicken, look for white meat chicken breasts, which have less fat than dark meat. If it's skinless, it's even lower in fat.

**3. Try the substitutions.** Ask for a side salad with low-fat dressing to replace fries in a combination meal. For kids meals, opt for milk as a beverage and fruit for dessert.

**4. For toppings,** go with low-fat options like lettuce, tomato and onion; condiments like ketchup, mustard or relish; and low-fat or fat-free dressings.

**5. Round out your meal** by ordering **healthy side dishes**, such as a side salad with low-fat or fat-free dressing, baked potato or fruit. Boost the nutritional value of your baked potato by topping it with vegetables, salsa or chili.

**6. Calcium is important** at all ages, but especially for growing bones! To get more calcium drink reduced-fat white or low-fat chocolate milk or add a slice of cheese to your sandwich. Choose dairy-based treats. Options include yogurt, milkshake or frozen dairy dessert.

**7. Look for ways to increase your fiber** intake. Chili with beans is high in fiber with 8 grams in a large bowl. Entrée salads are also a good source of fiber at 3 to 6 grams per serving.

**8. For best nutrient value,** foods should be **freshly prepared** all day long. Over time, items that are prepared ahead and stored under a heat lamp lose nutrients as well as quality. Salad items that stand exposed to air and light will gradually lose nutrients and quality, too. Choose a restaurant that serves food as fresh as possible.

**9. Portion size** is important for children. Children's menus provide smaller portion sizes and have been designed to provide ample nourishment for smaller bodies.

**10. Eat slowly.** When possible, encourage your children to eat more slowly. It takes about 20 minutes for the brain to get the message from the stomach that you are no longer hungry. Fast eaters often are overeaters! Slow eaters tend to eat less and still are satisfied.

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